

THE STORY OF PRETTY VAN PELT

In 1776, during the Revolutionary War, there lived in Richmondtown in what we now call the Voorlezer's House, a family named Van Pelt. They had a little daughter about four years old who was so sweet and lovely that everyone called her "Pretty" — her real first name has been forgotten. Quartered in the house with the Van Pelt family was a Hessian soldier whose name was Ernst and who was a drummer. Ernst became very fond of little Pretty and taught her to dance to the rat-tat-tat of his drum. Unfortunately Pretty became very ill and Ernst was heart-broken. He said: "Pretty will die and I will be buried with her". Sad to say, this came true for the very day Pretty passed away, Ernst was killed in one of the skirmishes that took place near Richmondtown between the British and Hessian troops and the Americans. They were buried side by side in the little cemetery not far from the house which can be seen to this day to the rear of the Third County Court House though if any stones marked their graves, they have long since disappeared.

Perhaps if you listen very carefully when you go into the Voorlezer's House, you just might hear the sound of Pretty's dancing feet and the beat of Ernst's drum.